



POL 23-9 CAMB
Department of State TELEGRAM

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CONFIDENTIAL 870

EXCISE

PAGE 01 BANGKO 03218 181216Z

20-10
ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 OC-06 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-04 NSC-10 P-03
RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 UPW-01 AID-28 IO-13 OPR-02 O-03
E-15 RSR-01 NIC-01 MC-02 SY-03 /144 W

035782

O 181400Z MAR 70
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4477
INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN COUP D'ETAT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY Rubley DATE 10/9/80
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

1. HAVING BECOME AWARE THAT PHNOM PENH TO WASHINGTON
COMMUNICATIONS ARE OUT (EXCEPT POSSIBLY FOR BRITS),
FOLLOWING IS ROUND-UP OF FRAGMENTS ON CAMBODIAN
SITUATION AVAILABLE HERE:

A. FBIS MONITORED RKG COMMUNIQUE 1705 LOCAL AS FOLLOWS:
"IN VIEW OF POLITICAL CRISIS CREATED IN RECENT DAYS BY
CHIEF OF STATE PRINCE SIHANOUK, AND IN CONFORMITY WITH
CONSTITUTION OF CAMBODIA, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND COUNCIL
OF KINGDOM DURING PLENARY SESSION MARCH 18 AT 1300 HAVE
UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO WITHDRAW CONFIDENCE IN PRINCE
SIHANOUK. AS OF 1300 HOURS 18 MARCH, PRINCE
SIHANOUK SHALL CEASE HIS FUNCTION AS CHIEF OF STATE
OF CAMBODIA. MR. CHENG HENG, CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY, IS ENTRUSTED WITH THE FUNCTION OF CHIEF
OF STATE UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION OF A TRUE CHIEF
OF STATE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE NATIONAL
CONSTITUTION." COMMUNIQUE WAS FOLLOWED BY A

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 03218 181216Z

STATEMENT BY CHENG HENG IN WHICH HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOW ASSUMED POWER AND APPEALING TO THE BONZES TO HELP IN RESTORING CALM. FBIS WILL BE GETTING THE TEXT OF THAT OUT SEPARATELY.

B. EARLIER, UBA FLIGHT ETA PHNOM PENH 1120 LOCAL WAS TURNED BACK EVEN WHILE IN POCHENTONG LANDING PATTERN WITH EXPLANATION ONLY THAT AIRPORT WAS CLOSED. ONE OF MANY US NEWSMEN ABOARD THE FLIGHT TOLD EMBOFF AIRLINE OFFICIALS REPORTED TO HIM THAT RKG LATER ISSUED A "NOTAM" ADVISING THAT CAMBODIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS WILL BE CLOSED. "INDEFINITELY."

C. APPROX 1500 LOCAL FBIS MONITORED WITH POOR RECEPTIVITY RKG COMMUNIQUE ACCUSING COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE OF SPREADING FALSE RUMORS, BRIBING RKG OFFICIALS, DISTRIBUTING ANTI-RKG TRACTS IN EFFORT SET KHMER AGAINST KHMER. COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT IN VIEW THESE CONDITIONS, PHNOM PENH POLICE CHIEF (BUOR HORL) BEING RELIEVED OF FUNCTIONS AND GOVT WOULD TAKE "EXTREME MEASURES" TO RESTORE CALM.

2. COMMENT: CHENG HENG WAS DESIGNATED ACTING CHIEF OF STATE BY SIHANOUK HIMSELF WHEN LATTER LEFT COUNTRY JAN 6. A LONG-TIME ASSEMBLYMAN, 50 YEAR OLD CHENG WAS FIRST ELECTED ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN OCT 1968.

A FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND A "MILLIONAIRE SOLICITOR", CHENG HENG NEVERTHELESS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RELATIVE POLITICAL NON-ENTITY. GP-3 UNGER

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